School of Medicine engaged in research aimed at improving health in S.C. and beyond.
The Curious Case of Marcus Brown

The Ultrasound Institute recently partnered with the College of Education and area schools to bring ultrasound technology into high school classrooms. The teaching module helped students learn about anatomy and genetics.

A Transformational Step

A new School of Medicine center is working to bring basic science researchers and clinicians together to work on projects that can make a difference in South Carolina and beyond.

Dual Purpose

The number of physician-scientists is declining, making dual degree students, like Johnie Hodge, increasingly valuable when it comes to translating biomedical discoveries into medical practice.

Relevant Research

Pat Beckler, a School of Medicine donor, is honoring the memory of her husband John by funding research to find a cure for the disease that stole his memory – Alzheimer’s.

Filling the Pipeline

The John T. Stevens Endowed Scholarship Fund is helping students from Lancaster and Kershaw Counties realize their dreams of becoming physicians.

From Ph.D. to M.D.

Will Sharp, earned a Ph.D. from the School of Medicine in 1994, but soon discovered he wanted to do clinical work as well, so he returned to USC and earned his Doctor of Medicine degree.

Vital Signs, Faculty Focus, Alumni News
THE CURIOUS CASE OF MARCUS BROWN

A JOINT PROJECT WITH THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION GIVES MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS A LESSON IN ANATOMY, PHYSIOLOGY, GENETICS — AND ULTRASOUND.

No one has ever actually met star high school football player Marcus Brown. That’s because the senior who collapsed on the field in the first game of the season doesn’t actually exist. But by the end of each semester, middle and high school students at schools across South Carolina probably know more about this fictional student athlete than their own real-life family members.

Marcus Brown’s medical history is the centerpiece of a teaching module in anatomy and biology courses at 16 schools that participated in a recent 18-month joint venture with USC’s School of Medicine and the College of Education. The project gives students an interesting case study that guides them through an exploration of various physiological conditions that might have contributed to the star athlete’s collapse.

In the process, students learn about genetics and human physiology and explore the possibilities of whether Marcus might have had Marfan Syndrome and a corresponding aortic aneurysm or perhaps a sickle cell trait that compromised his blood flow. They also learn about other simple things that might have contributed to his collapse such as dehydration and a common heart condition called hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.

As an added bonus, the students get to use portable ultrasound devices demonstrated by medical students and faculty from the School of Medicine that allow them to see — perhaps for the first time ever — the real-time functioning of the heart, aorta and other parts of the circulatory system discussed in the Marcus Brown case history.

Stephanie Bailey, a USC marine science graduate and science teacher at Airport High School in West Columbia, says incorporating the ultrasound devices into her classroom teaching is especially helpful for addressing an age-old question from students: “Students will sometimes ask, ‘Why do I have to know this?’,” she says. “Looking at the heart with an ultrasound shows them the relevance — this isn’t just stuff in a textbook.”

Christine Lotter, a professor in the College of Education at Carolina, worked with Dick Hoppmann, director of the School of Medicine’s Ultrasound Institute, to create the collaboration with the schools and the lessons plans for the teachers. She says the hands-on experiences with ultrasound equipment makes learning more tangible.

“Kids think ultrasound is just for pregnancy, so they’re surprised that it has many more applications than that, and they get excited when they see the heart and carotid arteries at work,” Lotter says. “Incorporating ultrasound into the curriculum also gives teachers increased content knowledge and a more novel way of teaching the content.”

Hoppmann led efforts several years ago as dean of the medical school to become the first medical school in the country to infuse ultrasound technology into all four years of medical education at the USC School of Medicine. Now he’s seeking more avenues for exposing students of all ages to the technology.

“We’ve had an interest in using it for teaching at all levels for a long time because there’s something very special about looking inside the body with ultrasound. With the excitement that comes with looking inside the body and understanding the body better, we were hoping that a couple of things would happen,” he says. “One would be that not only would they learn the material better in the life sciences, but they might even get excited about health care professions.”

Sumter middle school science teacher Jill Madsen says the program has made anatomy and physiology come to life for her seventh-graders and also pointed toward possible careers. “I tell them they can learn to do this. Some of them will be doctors and nurses. And some of them could be ultrasound technicians,” she says.

Hoppmann and Lotter plan to propose an even larger project to the National Science Foundation that would use online and in-class learning to expand the reach of the project. They’ve also explored the possibility of adding computer gaming elements to the learning module, tapping into game facets that tend to keep users engaged and motivated.

“We’re looking at how you keep students going to a higher and higher level of understanding with challenges and surprises and the whole notion of points and badges and leaderboards,” Hoppmann says. “The real key is make the program scalable, so that we can contribute to professional development for teachers across the country and get students interested in their own health and in the health of their communities.”
Christine Turley, M.D., loved her time as a pediatrician in a rural community our West, taking care of patients, receiving immediate feedback from children whose pain she could ease. When she moved into academics and administration in a clinical setting, teaching the next generation of physicians, she could also see the impact of her work.

But when Turley spent more than a decade in Texas working to develop vaccines that now remain well, will ever say ‘thank you’ to me,” Turley says. “I’ll never get gratification like I

Christine Turley has been a professor of pediatrics at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine since 2012, and has been the vice chair for research in the pediatrics department since 2015. She also has served as chief medical officer for Health Sciences South Carolina.

“This fall, she was named as founding director of the USC School of Medicine’s Research Center for Transforming Health. She says she is excited to see what medical research can mean for a state like South Carolina, a state that suffers from a variety of ills from low birth-weight babies to high rates of heart disease, stroke and obesity.

The medical school’s new center is looking to change those health indicators — in a big way. The center will provide a hub for translational researchers, allowing them to reach across departments while providing collaborative forums. For example, if a researcher were interested in cardiovascular health, the center could provide resources or act as a bridge to bring together others looking at the same topic. The idea is to identify the work that is already being done, and then build on it successfully.

“Our research needs to make a difference in the way we practice medicine and deliver health care right here in South Carolina. ‘We want to bridge the basic science research and the clinical research to move our efforts from the laboratory bench to the patient bedside,’ says Leo Hall, M.D., executive dean of the USC School of Medicine Columbia. The desire clearly is there on the part of faculty and students to participate in ground-breaking research, Turley says. For example, if percent of last year’s first year medical students applied for summer research positions in the School of Medicine.

“We needed to think about having a center within the medical school that would become a resource for people who are looking to partner with curious, talented colleagues to take their efforts to a transformative level,” Turley says. “This will be an opportunity to have an infrastructure that could enable life-changing types of work.

“This opportunity makes me so hopeful. Compared to many parts of the country, our state is ‘research poor,’ which is known to delay state of the art health care being delivered, and thinking in progressive ways about how we study high priority problems in novel ways, to address health and health outcomes for all populations in SC -- young and old, people of all races--because that is how we transform health. But that’s not easy.

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**A TRANSFORMATIONAL STEP**

**NEW CENTER AIDS TO CHANGE HEALTH OUTCOMES IN SC AND BEYOND**

“OUR RESEARCH NEEDS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WAY WE PRACTICE MEDICINE AND DELIVER HEALTH CARE RIGHT HERE IN SOUTH CAROLINA. WE WANT TO BRIDGE THE BASIC SCIENCE RESEARCH AND THE CLINICAL RESEARCH TO MOVE OUR EFFORTS FROM THE LABORATORY BENCH TO THE PATIENT BEDSIDE.” - DEAN LES HALL

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Johnie Hodge knows he wants a career focused on medical research. He also knows the importance of having access to patients.

The solution – dual degrees from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine.

Hodge finished the first two years of medical school before moving over to the doctoral program in biomedical sciences. He now is in the third and final year of the Ph.D. program, and plans to start his final two years of medical school this fall.

“I really want to do medical research, but I want it to be clinically oriented, basic science research,” Hodge says. “I feel like to really know how to do basic science research a Ph.D. is a good way to be trained to do that. And you need the M.D. to deal with people and to help get that clinically focused aspect.”

Hodge earned his undergraduate and master’s degree in bioengineering with an electrical concentration from Clemson in 2013 before coming home to Carolina. A native of Elgin, he attended Cardinal Newman High School in Columbia.

He expects to earn his Ph.D. in May, with his goal to have two first-author papers submitted by then. His doctoral research looks at innate immune therapies for breast cancer. His first project involves the testing of a Chinese herb-derived compound called emodin as an adjuvant therapy to prevent breast cancer metastatic recurrence after surgical resection of the primary tumor. The goal of the second project is to increase the effectiveness of dendritic cell vaccine therapy through increased expression of microRNA 155 in the dendritic cells.

Hodge, along with two other Carolina graduate students, also is working with Angela Murphy in the medical school and Susan Steck from the Arnold School of Public Health. The two associate professors received a $405,000 grant from the Susan G. Komen Foundation to study disparities in breast cancer outcomes.

M.D./Ph.D. DUAL DEGREE PROGRAM HELPING CREATE NEEDED PHYSICIAN SCIENTISTS

The dual degree physician-scientist has the skills necessary to provide “a communication corridor between clinicians and scientists,” says Dr. Francis Spinale, the associate dean for research and graduate education at the USC School of Medicine. Spinale holds an M.D. and a Ph.D.

“The current NIH statistics have identified a steady increase in Ph.D. scientists obtaining biomedical sciences funding, but a continued decline in physician-scientists, particularly those with a dual degree applying for research funding,” Spinale says. “As the pressure for generating clinical revenue continues to increase, with decreases in reimbursements for clinical activity, the need to bridge the chasm between clinical care and biomedical discoveries will become more acutely needed. Those individuals that obtain the dual degree and, as such, both clinical and formal biomedical science training, will become an ever more valuable piece to the puzzle in translating our biomedical discoveries to changes in medical practice.”
POSSIBLE THROUGH $200,000 GIFT

RELEVANT RESEARCH
DONOR MAKES MEDICAL TRIALS AND CRITICALLY NEEDED RESEARCH
POSSIBLE THROUGH $200,000 GIFT

Patricia Beckler pulls no punches when it comes to her feelings about the disease that robbed her and her husband of their golden years. “Alzheimer’s has been the most devastating thing that has happened to our family,” she says. John Beckler had a long career with Eastman Kodak and Eastman Chemical Co. He retired at age 64 after he began showing symptoms of forgetfulness that would ultimately lead to a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s and 14 years of decline and deterioration.

“Those early symptoms were the uncharacteristic forgetting of appointments, meetings and plans he and his wife had made. “We had a crisis one night when we were supposed to meet for dinner,” Beckler says, adding that her husband drove around Columbia for a bit, then forgot why he was there. “After that crisis, he said, ‘Something is terribly wrong.' From that time on, it was a family journey.”

John Beckler died in 2010 not recognizing his five grandchildren, his two daughters or even his wife of 54 years. Five years later Beckler wrote a book “The Long Goodbye,” detailing her family’s struggle with Alzheimer’s. She gives the books away to various civic groups and includes information on how people can donate to the S.C. chapter of the National Alzheimer’s Association.

Because of her family’s personal journey with the disease and an understanding of the emotional and financial toll the disease is taking on our country, Beckler decided to invest $200,000 at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine in Columbia, for the purpose of funding clinical trials and basic science research related to Alzheimer’s disease. “I became aware of little pockets of research at the School of Medicine,” Beckler says. “It was delightful to me that our university was going forward with this research.”

Specifically, the John D. and Patricia L. Beckler Alzheimer’s and Cognitive Diseases Research Fund is providing $100,000 to support the development of a new Ph.D. scientist who’s got an interest in aging and cognitive decline, it’s going to have a multiplier effect by supporting the training of a new Ph.D. scientist who’s got an interest in aging and cognitive decline. According to Sen, many of the drug therapies used to treat Alzheimer’s also are effective for treating memory disorders caused by strokes. Sometimes those treatments are even more effective in stroke patients.

“Once a child of my stroke patients have memory disorders,” Sen says. “It affects their quality of life.”

In the basic sciences, Drs. Larry Reagan and Jim Fadel want to see whether a strain of insulin through the nasal passages into the brain can stop or even reverse cognitive decline. According to them, one of the best parts of Beckler’s gift is that it will support not only their basic science research, but also a Ph.D. student in neuroscience, the inaugural recipient of the John D. and Patricia L. Beckler Fellowship in Alzheimer’s and Cognitive Diseases.

“For Beckler, the rapid pace of treatment development gives her hope. “I believe that a cure for this dreadful disease will ultimately be found,” she says. “This is, in turn, has enabled five students, post-graduation and residency, to return home as physicians where they can make the most difference and have the greatest impact.”

FILLING THE PIPELINE
Stevens Scholarship makes a way for students from Kershaw, Lancaster counties

It sounds like the plot for a television show: Aspiring doctor wins scholarship to help finance his medical school tuition and after graduation, he works in the small town that provided his scholarship.

For Dillon Morrow, it’s more like a dream come true. The second-year student at USC’s School of Medicine will receive a $30,000 annual scholarship from the John T. Stevens Endowed Scholarship Fund. “This scholarship is special because it will allow me to come back to the community I grew up in and serve as a physician,” says Morrow, who is from Kershaw County. “Growing up in a small town you become very close with the physicians who take care of you. It is truly these tight-knit relationships that I look forward to developing with my future patients, while being able to meet their medical needs.”

The fund at USC was established by the Stevens Foundation in 1945 and has since helped five other students realize their dreams of becoming physicians by reducing their educational debt.

The scholarship is for students living in Lancaster or Kershaw counties and was dramatically increased this year to account for the rapid increase in medical school tuition. It provides a nearly full scholarship at the School of Medicine, where in-state tuition is more than $40,000 a year.

“It will cut a significant amount of my anticipated debt, which will allow me to be more free to pursue any specialty without monetary influence,” Morrow says.

The scholarship also helps the School of Medicine meet one of its primary missions — providing a pipeline of primary care physicians for the state’s rural areas, says Kim Riggi, senior director of development for the medical school.

“The John T. Stevens Scholarship Fund has played an important role in reducing the financial debt of qualified students originating from Kershaw and Lancaster counties,” Riggi said. “This, in turn, has enabled students, post-graduation and residency, to return home as physicians where they can make the most difference and have the greatest impact.”
Dr. Will Sharp, splits his time at the University of Chicago between treating traumas and broken bones in the emergency room and performing research on cardiac arrest and resuscitation science in the laboratory.

Sharp’s journey to his position as an emergency medicine physician and a researcher followed a somewhat nontraditional route. A native of Columbia, he earned an undergraduate degree in biology and history from Wofford College before earning his doctorate in biomedical science at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine. While a doctoral student at the medical school, he worked with faculty members on cardiac cell biology and taught classes such as gross anatomy and histology. After earning his Ph.D. from the school in 1994, he headed to a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Illinois in Chicago.

While he liked research, he soon figured out he wanted to do clinical work, as well. “I wasn’t happy just being in the lab. I knew I wanted to see patients,” he says.

To achieve that goal, Sharp knew he would need to add an M.D. to his professional pedigree and returned to Columbia to become a medical student at the School of Medicine. He completed his medical degree in 2003 on the path to emergency medicine. Along the way, he also was awarded a one-year Rotarian Ambassadorial Fellowship to study gene therapy of cystic fibrosis at the University of Oxford in England. He completed his emergency medicine residency at the University of Michigan in 2007.

Now, as an assistant professor and researcher at the University of Chicago, he estimates he spends 60 percent of his time as an ER doctor, with the remaining hours spent in the lab, conducting research and writing research papers and grant applications.

“I wanted to combine my clinical interest in emergency medicine with my basic training here in cardiovascular biology,” he says. “My primary interest is cardiogenic shock, or resuscitating patients who’ve had a sudden cardiac arrest – something we see on a daily basis in the emergency department.

“And because I have that basic science background, I can develop certain insights. I can translate it into my clinical practice, and it allows me to design research projects that address that issue.”

An NIH R01 grant funds his research, which looks at mitochondrial dysfunction. Mitochondria are often called the powerhouses of the cell, and they help convert oxygen and sugar, fat and protein from foods into usable energy. Following cardiac arrest, when there is a lack of blood and oxygen flowing to the heart, mitochondrial function suffers.

“We’re trying to generate new therapies or treatments to target this mitochondrial function to improve the heart function following resuscitation from cardiac arrest,” he says. “We think that will improve not only function of the heart but also the recovery of the brain following cardiac arrest, and will lead to better patient outcomes.”

He has received young investigator awards from the American Heart Association Resuscitation Science Symposium and from the Society of Academic Emergency Medicine.

With a research specialty that focuses on the heart, many people have asked him why he didn’t pursue cardiology.

“Emergency medicine is what interested me clinically so that’s the direction I went,” Sharp says. “My training at USC gave me the background and foundation for what I needed for my future career.”

**ALUMNI PROFILE**

**FROM Ph.D. TO M.D.**

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SCHOOL OF MEDICINE FACULTY AND SCHOLARS RECOGNIZED WITH BREAKTHROUGH AWARDS

Two faculty members and two student scholars from the School of Medicine were recently announced as 2018 Breakthrough Award winners.

Each spring, the Office of the Vice President for Research honors a group of the most outstanding researchers and scholars working at every career level throughout the USC System. The Breakthrough family of awards has been carefully designed to recognize the best and brightest faculty and graduate students with three specially tailored awards programs:

• Breakthrough in Research Leadership award: Dr. Mitzi Nagarkatti, chair of the Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology
• Breakthrough Star award: Dr. Susan Wood, assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacology, Physiology and Neuroscience
• Breakthrough Graduate Scholar award: Julie Finnell, Ph.D. student in the Department of Pharmacology, Physiology, and Neuroscience/mentee of Dr. Wood
• Breakthrough Graduate Scholar award: Victoria Macht, Ph.D. student in the Department of Psychology/mentee of Drs. Kelly and Reagan (Department of Pharmacology, Physiology and Neuroscience)

All of the award recipients were honored in April with a booklet featuring their outstanding work, a special dinner celebration and other tokens of the USC research community’s appreciation for their contributions.

VITAL SIGNS

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDENT SELECTED FOR AAPA’S GOVERNANCE COMMISSION

Jamie Sabo, a member of our inaugural class of Physician Assistant students, was selected as the only student representative on the American Academy of Physician Assistants Governance Commission.

The Governance Commission is responsible for reviewing AAPA governance documents, reviewing policies related to membership privileges and responsibilities, and serving in an advisory capacity to the Nominating Work Group and Constituent Relations Work Group.

Sabo has already begun fulfilling her role on the commission by reviewing the AAPA bylaws and other documents and participating in conference calls with representatives from across the country.

“At first I was intimidated. There are a lot of very experienced and intelligent people on the commission, including the current AAPA president and the immediate past president,” says Sabo. “But I found that everyone has been very supportive and interested in my perspective. It’s been really interesting to see all sides of the conversation.”

Kandy Velázquez, Ph.D., has received a Pathway to Independence Award (K99R00) from the National Institutes of Health to study how a traditional herbal compound may help curb pain in cancer patients.

Velázquez, a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology, will receive $965,245 over the next five years for her project titled, the Effects of Ojeok-san on Neuro-Immune Interactions in Cancer-Induced Visceral Pain.

The Pathways to Independence Award is designed to facilitate a timely transition from a mentored postdoctoral research position to a stable independent research position. Velázquez will work with four faculty mentors over the course of the grant:

• Angela Murphy, Ph.D., University of South Carolina School of Medicine, associate professor in the Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology and Velázquez’s postdoc advisor
• Mitzi Nagarkatti, Ph.D., University of South Carolina School of Medicine, chair of the Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology and SmartState Endowed Chair of Center for Cancer Drug Discovery
• Daping Fan, Ph.D., University of South Carolina School of Medicine, associate professor in the Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy, and
• Richard Johnson, Ph.D., University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, professor in the Department of Physiological Sciences

Velázquez is only the second researcher at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine to receive this prestigious award.
Our Genetic Counseling Program, which was one of the first in the country, hosted its annual Fall Symposium on Oct. 27 at the Palmetto Health Richland campus.

The event drew more than 100 genetic counselors, geneticists, university faculty, graduate students, residents and fellows and health care professionals, and featured topics including advances in prenatal and cancer genetic screening and the role of genomics in therapeutic treatments.

MEDICAL STUDENTS TO BE PART OF THE CAROLINA HEALTH ADVOCACY MEDICOLEGAL PARTNERSHIP

The University of South Carolina’s School of Law launched the Carolina Health Advocacy Medicolegal Partnership (CHAMPS) Clinic last fall.

“The main idea of this clinic is to train a new generation of doctors and lawyers to work together to improve health outcomes,” says Emily Suski, a newly appointed assistant professor of law and director of the CHAMPS Clinic.

Interdisciplinary teams including medical students, residents, physicians, law students and social work students will work together on cases referred through pediatric clinics staffed by the Palmetto Health-USC Medical Group. Under Suski’s supervision, the student teams will discuss the pertinent medical issues of each case and determine what legal remedies might be available to address them.

Brain-Heart Consortium helps explore the link between PTSD and cardiovascular diseases

Last summer, the Department of Pharmacology, Physiology and Neuroscience at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine-Columbia, the VA Office of Research & Development at Dorn VA Medical Center and the Dorn Research Institute co-sponsored the Brain-Heart Consortium.

The overarching goal of the multisite event was to develop translational models for enhancing our understanding of the molecular, genetic and physiologic basis for the comorbidity between post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and cardiovascular diseases (CVD).

This would be the first step in being able to rapidly translate these findings into novel diagnostic and treatment strategies for these disorders. The meeting had 24 attendees, and included participants associated with seven VA medical centers. There was a breadth of expertise brought together at the meeting spanning both CVD and PTSD, as well as the multisite involvement and a mix of clinicians and basic scientists.

The group is currently working on a position paper outlining provocative concept project areas that were identified for future studies related to comorbidities between CVD and PTSD. Drs. Maelene Wilson and Francis Spinale will serve as the USC School of Medicine representatives on the Brain-Heart Leadership team, and the meeting included five talks from USC School of Medicine faculty.

USC SCHOOL OF MEDICINE MAKING AN IMPACT ON SOUTHERN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Last fall at the Southern Medical Association’s Medical Summit Conference, third year medical student Daniel Peters was recognized as the sole recipient of the Society of 1906 Scholarship.

The Society of 1906 scholarship was established to commemorate the year Southern Medical Association was founded. The scholarship provides $2,000 to a third year medical student. Peters is from Clemson, S.C. He completed his undergraduate degree at the University of South Carolina. Former USC School of Medicine Dean Dr. Donald DiPette was installed as the Association’s 113th president.

The Southern Medical Association (SMA) was founded in 1906 as a scientific body of physicians dedicated to fostering the art and science of medicine through education. SMA Members' commitment to multidisciplinary, interprofessional education has endured for more than 100 years.
Therin Hill, PA-C, MBA, AACC was named a Distinguished Fellow (DFAAPA) of The American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA). Hill serves as director of clinical education for the School of Medicine’s Physician Assistant program. Hill also serves as a School of Medicine and Graduate School faculty member.

Allan Brett, M.D., and Chris Goodman, M.D., clinical professor of internal medicine and assistant professor of clinical internal medicine, respectively, published a paper titled “Gabapentin and Pregabalin for Pain — Is Increased Concern?” in the August edition of the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine.

Wayne Carver, Ph.D., chair of our Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy, is leading one of four inaugural teams to receive a Stimulus Research Program (SRP) Award from SC EPSCoR/IdEA. The award will help fund the team’s efforts to generate critical preliminary data illustrating proof-of-concept toward the development of advanced biomaterial alternatives to the synthetic materials currently used in vascular replacements. The interdisciplinary team also includes Dr. John Eberth, assistant professor in the USC SOM Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy, and researchers from Clemson University, Winthrop University and Claflin University.

Edie Goldsmith, Ph.D., was named program director for The South Carolina IdEA Networks for Biomedical Research Excellence (SC INBRE) Program. Goldsmith is a professor in the Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy and director of the Biomedical Science Graduate Program. She replaces Lucia Pinal-Creek, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Pathology, Microbiology & Immunology, who stepped down from program director to program coordinator.

Angela Murphy, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology, was recognized as one of only six Breakthrough Leadership in Research award recipients. The award recognizes USC’s distinguished senior faculty. Nagarkatti’s has been with the School of Medicine since August 2005. Nagarkatti’s broad research interests include inflammation, cancer immunology and immunotherapy, biodefense, immunopharmacology, immunotoxicology, as well as complementary and alternative medicine.

Donald DiPette, M.D., former USC School of Medicine dean and current faculty member, was installed as the Southern Medical Association’s 113th president at the association’s Medical Summit Conference in St. Petersburg, Fla., in December.

Mitzi Nagarkatti, Ph.D., chair of Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology, was recognized one of four inaugural teams to receive a Stimulus Research Program (SRP) Award from SC EPSCoR/IdEA. The award will help fund the team’s efforts to generate critical preliminary data illustrating proof-of-concept toward the development of advanced biomaterial alternatives to the synthetic materials currently used in vascular replacements. The interdisciplinary team also includes Dr. John Eberth, assistant professor in the USC SOM Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy, and researchers from Clemson University, Winthrop University and Claflin University.

The award was jointly awarded to Murphy and Susan Steck, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the Arnold School of Public Health.

Mitzi Nagarkatti, Ph.D., chair of Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology, was recognized as one of only six Breakthrough Leadership in Research award recipients. The award recognizes USC’s distinguished senior faculty. Nagarkatti’s has been with the School of Medicine since August 2005. Nagarkatti’s broad research interests include inflammation, cancer immunology and immunotherapy, biodefense, immunopharmacology, immunotoxicology, as well as complementary and alternative medicine.

Ruth A. Riley, M.S., AHIP, was recognized at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) in Boston on Nov. 3 for her role as past president of the association. For the past three years, she has served on the AAHSL Board of Directors as president-elect, president and past president. Riley has served as the USC School of Medicine’s director of library services since January 2000. She also has served as assistant dean for executive affairs since 2012.

Scott Strayer, M.D., co-authored a recent paper published by the Annals of Internal Medicine suggesting recommendations for colorectal cancer screenings should be reassessed. Strayer is a clinical professor in the University of South Carolina School of Medicine’s Department of Family and Preventive Medicine.

Eric Williams, M.D., accepted the position of assistant dean of student affairs. Williams previously served as assistant professor of Clinical Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science. He also worked in the Counseling and Psychiatric Services department at the Center for Health and Wellness on the main USC campus. Since 2013 he has served as the director for the Introduction to Clinical Medicine course.

Williams replaces Donald Kenney, Ph.D., who retired at the end of 2017.

Susan Wood, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacology, Physiology and Neuroscience, was recognized with a Breakthrough Star award, which honors outstanding early-career faculty. Wood joined the School of Medicine in February 2013 after completing her postdoctoral training at Michigan State University and the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia/University of Pennsylvania. Wood’s research focuses on stress resiliency, as well as the comorbidity of psychological disorders and cardiovascular disease.
**CLASS OF 1986**  
Allen Meadows, M.D. (internal medicine), “I was recently elected vice president of the American College of Allergy Asthma and Immunology. I just completed my term as chair of the Advocacy Council of the ACAAI.”

March Scabrough, M.D. (gastroenterology), Scabrough was named the president-elect for the South Carolina Medical Association in May. He was installed in April at the SCMCA meeting in Greenville.

**CLASS OF 1988**  
Richard Frierson, M.D., DFAPA (psychiatry), Frierson co-edited the American Psychiatric Associations Publishing’s Textbook of Forensic Psychiatry, 3rd edition. He was also named president-elect of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, the largest professional organization of forensic psychiatrists. AAPL currently has over 2,000 members in North America and around the world.

**CLASS OF 1983**  
Gregory H Braxham, M.D. (otolaryngology) “I have recently been named the chief medical officer for Barnes-Jewish West County Hospital. I am excited about the new opportunity to serve as a leader in our hospital, having served in medical school administration as associate dean of clinical affairs in the past. We have two large projects that demand a lot of attention as we ‘Go Live’ on our system wide Epic implementation over the 13 hospitals, the academic faculty practice and the BJC medical group. We are also in the middle of our hospital replacement project and anticipate a move in date of mid-2019.”

**CLASS OF 1991**  
Lawrence Lamb, M.N., Ph.D. (biomedical science) Lamb serves as professor of medicine, senior scientist in UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center and a scientific co-founder of Incysus (a UAB spinoff biopharmaceutical company). In early 2017, Lamb’s team received a European patent for their novel approach to fight cancer, known as drug-resistant immunotherapy, or DRI. In early 2017, Lamb’s team presented at the Immuno-Oncology Summit in Boston in August.

**CLASS OF 1998**  
Bob Underwood, M.D. (emergency medicine), “I am assuming the role of chief medical officer for San Juan Regional Medical Center in Farmington, NM. This is a 194 bed medical center with an associated medical group, San Juan Health Partners, located in the Four Corners Region of the United States.”

**CLASS OF 2000**  
Ellen Porthkeast, M.D. (interventional pain), “Our family moved to San Francisco, and I started a new job with The Permanente Medical Group doing interventional pain.”

**CLASS OF 2009**  
Jo Mason, M.D. (psychiatry), Mason and her husband Wayne Evin, welcomed new baby Grace Elizabeth Evin on October 30, 2017. They also have a daughter Esther (5) and son Kenny (2). Jo is a double boarded general and child psychiatrist and is an assistant professor in the Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science at the USC School of Medicine and Palmetto Health USC Medical Group. She is also the director of the Mj Student Psychiatry Clerkship at USC School of Medicine.

**CLASS OF 2010**  
Chris Goodman, M.D. (internal medicine), Goodman has volunteered at the Good Samaritan Clinic for about four years. He also serves on the board of directors and as co-medical director. The Good Samaritan Clinic is a faith-based 501(c) (3) organization offering free health and dental care primarily to the Hispanic community in four South Carolina locations. A number of our students and alumni have been involved there over the years – especially USC Family Medicine providers. We are in need of more providers though. There are three locations in the Columbia area, the two main ones being open once a week. I usually go after work once a week and it only requires about two hours of my time. We are also in need of additional family medicine or OB/GYN practitioners for our women’s clinic, as well as any specialists willing to donate time. The Free Medical Clinic does a great job with specialty care, but there are limits to what they are able to do for those that are undocumented. Please contact me if you are interested in volunteering. Contact: jomason@uscmed.sc.edu or 803-777-6814.

**CLASS OF 2011**  
Brittany Knick Ragon, M.D. (hematology/oncology) “I graduated from my Hematology/Oncology fellowship at MD Anderson Cancer Center in June and have started my new position as an assistant professor and adult leukemia/skin cell transplant specialist at Levine Cancer Institute in Charlotte, NC. I have a passion for the patients of the Carolinas and wanted to come back in order to bring early phase clinical trials to the patients of the southeast. We are so excited to be back and closer to home (and for our son to be closer to his grandparents)!!

**CLASS OF 2012**  
Brittany Sauersohn, M.D. (psychiatry), “I live in Beaufort, S.C. and love rural health. I work for Coastal Empire Community Mental Health Center in Beaufort. I also work some days in Walterboro, S.C. I have a toddler named Gunner. My husband and I are launching a fishing charter business this year called Tide Ryder, also in Beaufort, SC. Happens that my 2012 classmate, Alicia Watson, and I both work as staff psychiatrists for the Department of Mental Health Coastal Empire offices.
ALUMNI NEWS

CLASS OF 2013
Sam Durrett, M.D. (pulmonary and critical care), “I’m a second year pulmonary critical care fellow at East Carolina University. Emily and I will be celebrating our 9th anniversary in June. Our children Piper (5 years old) and Hollis (3 years old) are doing well in the local Montessori school.”

ASHLIE EVANS, PH.D., (biomedical sciences), Evans welcomed a baby girl named Charlie Reese on April 17, 2017. Evans is a senior medical science liaison, cardiovascular and renal for Otsuka Pharmaceuticals in Greenville, S.C.

CLASS OF 2016
Chardwick Barrs, M.D. (radiology) “I got married last February. I also finished my intern year at MCG in Augusta, Ga. We moved to Memphis, Tenn. in June 2017; and I started my first year of radiology residency at Baptist Memorial Hospital in Memphis.”

CONGRATULATIONS to our 2018 Alumni and Dean’s Award winners! The award recipients were recognized at a dinner at Stone River in West Columbia on March 19, 2018.

DEAN’S AWARD WINNERS:

ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS:

THE FOLLOWING ALUMNI ACCEPTED NEW POSITIONS ON THE ALUMNI BOARD THIS YEAR:
Stephanie Woollen, M.D. | Nephrology, ’88
David Adolph, M.D. | Allergy and Immunology, ’98
Steven Conso, M.D. | Hematology and Oncology, ’88
Elizabeth Mack, M.D. | Pediatric clinical care, ’03
Ann Marie Patterson, M.D. | Pediatrics, ’09

THE FOLLOWING ALUMNI WERE NAMED TO THE ALUMNI BOARD THIS YEAR:
Wallisa Vaughn, M.D. | Family medicine, ’06
Brandon Drafts, M.D. | Interventional cardiology, ’08
Maggie Gray, M.D. | Pediatric cardiology, ’11

ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS:

Katie Chambers, M.D. | Psychiatry, ’13

For a full list of recipients, visit bit.ly/SOMAwards18

CLASS NOTES
Submit class notes for the summer 2019 issue of South Carolina Medicine to holly.jefferson@uscmed.sc.edu.

SEND US YOUR SCHOOL OF MEDICINE PHOTOS
We want to preserve our history in photos, and your help is needed. Please send us your favorite photos from your time at the School of Medicine. We might display the images on campus or use them in future publications highlighting our history. Please email digital images to Alyssa Yancey, School of Medicine communications manager, at alyssa.yancey@uscmed.sc.edu. If you prefer to mail printed photos, contact Alyssa by email or phone 803-216-3302 to make arrangements for their return.
CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to all of our 2018 graduates! As our newest alumni, we hope you'll keep in touch. Visit www.sc.edu/medicine/alumni to find out how you can stay involved with the School of Medicine.